

# Reducing Mental Illness in Rural Jails

## CASE STUDY:

### LICKING AND KNOX COUNTIES, OHIO

## THE STEPPING UP INITIATIVE

### THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Like many counties in Ohio and across the country, Licking and Knox Counties face significant challenges addressing the needs of residents with mental illnesses, particularly those who are justice involved or at risk of becoming involved. Mental Health & Recovery of Licking and Knox Counties have made significant efforts toward addressing these needs, including, but not limited to, training more than 200 individuals in Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), including police officers, deputy sheriffs, probation officers, university police, jail staff and mental health crisis intervention workers.<sup>6</sup>

Licking and Knox Counties' residents with mental illnesses have consistently identified access to housing and housing stability as some of their main challenges for recovery. To help meet this need, Mental Health & Recovery of Licking and Knox Counties and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services partnered with The Main Place to develop a housing continuum for county residents with mental illnesses

### THE LICKING AND KNOX COUNTIES MODEL

The Main Place is a 501(c)3 consumer-operated mental health recovery center in Licking and Knox Counties in Ohio, just east of Columbus. It is operated for and by persons experiencing serious and persistent mental illnesses (SPMI). Since opening in 1986, its primary mission has been to promote recovery and well-being through education, advocacy and peer support. Each year the Main Place serves in excess of 700 adults in Licking and Knox Counties who experience serious and persistent mental illness, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, clinical depression, and panic and anxiety disorders. Without these services and support, many of their members would reside in a state psychiatric institution or other restrictive living environment.

After exploring the local availability of housing resources The Main Place set out on a journey to increase housing availability, implement a "transition in place model" and develop permanent supportive housing. They have been successful in the following:

- accessing transitional housing subsidies from our local mental health authority, Mental Health & Recovery of Licking and Knox Counties
- sponsoring a Shelter Plus Care subsidy program in partnership with Licking and Knox Metropolitan Housing Authorities, and
- working with both housing authorities to transition consumers from Shelter Plus Care to Section 8.

Their goal has been to establish a process for adults experiencing SPMI to get a place to live and be able to stay there as long as they wish, while the subsidy that supports that housing changes from emergency housing, to transitional housing, to Shelter Plus Care, to Section 8. This process eliminates the instability of frequently changing the people, places and things in a person's life who already have extreme difficulty carrying out the essential activities of daily living, allowing them to form and maintain stable relationships.



#### POPULATION:

KNOX COUNTY— 61,167

LICKING COUNTY— 169,390<sup>1</sup>

#### JAIL CAPACITY:

KNOX COUNTY—100<sup>2</sup>

LICKING COUNTY—329<sup>3</sup>

#### AVERAGE DAILY JAIL POPULATION:

KNOX COUNTY—58<sup>4</sup>

LICKING COUNTY—268<sup>5</sup>

The Main Place received funding to develop 10 units of Permanent Supportive Housing at The Place Next Door with help from the Federal Home Loan Bank, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the Ohio Housing Finance Association, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the City of Newark and Mental Health & Recovery of Licking and Knox Counties. They have since expanded to operate 37 units of housing for individuals with SPMI. Unit residents are those with the highest needs; many were formerly homeless and may also have experienced some sort of previous or current involvement with the criminal justice system. As a condition of their residency, individuals are required to maintain their sobriety and participate in activities and treatment at the Main Place and with other community-based behavioral health service providers.

## SUCCESSSES AND OUTCOMES

Research is clear that when people have access to consumer-operated services in addition to traditional treatment services, they have better outcomes. Data collected as part of The Main Place's participation in the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Seven Dimensions of Quality Institute show that after one year of participation in The Main Place's programs:

- 94 percent of participants are engaged in treatment
- 41 percent of participants report an increase in income from getting a job
- 82 percent reduction in the use of the ER, and
- 91 percent reduction in involvement with the law after one year participation in TMP programs.

***Mental Health & Recovery of Licking and Knox Counties provides for a number of services and supports for county residents with mental illnesses. They have also trained law enforcement on how to better respond to calls for service involving people with mental illnesses. Since 2004 in Licking County and 2009 in Knox County, MHR has sponsored 15 Crisis Intervention Team trainings (CIT) for police officers, deputy sheriffs, adult and juvenile probation officers, university police and security officers, jail staffs, and mental health crisis intervention workers. To date, over 200 people have received CIT training with 21 new officers trained in 2014. Over 20 percent of all law enforcement officers in both counties have been trained.***

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, State & County QuickFacts. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>. Accessed November 24, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Jails, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Survey of Jail Inmates, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Jails, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annual Survey of Jail Inmates, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on Crisis Intervention Teams, visit <https://www.nami.org/Law-Enforcement-and-Mental-Health/What-Is-CIT>.

## RESOURCE

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To read the full report and the companion case studies, visit [www.NACo.org/Stepping-Initiative](http://www.NACo.org/Stepping-Initiative)

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